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Hampshire County Council

13 December 2011

Councillor Ken Thornber CBE
Leader of the Council

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*rec'd.
19/12/11*

Dear Ms Warr

Potential Legal Challenges to Statutory Commissioning of Homecare

Thank you for your letter of 17 November 2011 drawing to our attention recent legal challenges by care providers.

The Council is aware of the recent judgements and notes your position. The Council is currently gathering information in respect of costs of provision of care in advance of consideration of the Council's social care budget for 2012-13.

The Council meets with Hampshire Domiciliary Care Providers on a quarterly basis and as part of the price review will be consulting with them on prices for 2012/13 at the next regular meeting.

You are of course aware of the recent establishment of the Preferred Providers Panel in respect of homecare. This included a full evaluation with providers being admitted to the panel based on an evaluation for a number of factors including quality and price. This has given us clear information on provider costs which were taken into account in establishing rates for the Preferred Provider Panel. The rates allow for flexibility in order to meet a service user's needs in their care packages. We will keep all of the prices under review.

One of the conditions of coming on to the Panel was that the providers agreed to use an electronic domiciliary care monitoring system. In respect of the costs for this, the Council is paying for one licence per provider and is bearing the cost of implementation of the computer system. Providers take responsibility for the cost of interfacing with the system and this results in benefits to the provider in terms of being paid within shorter timescales and streamlining office functions. The system provides evidence that care has been delivered which can only be of benefit to all concerned.

The Council will at all times meet its statutory duty to pay for care required to meet service user's eligible needs and it is important both in respect of care provision and proper use of public money that the Council can satisfy itself that care is being provided.

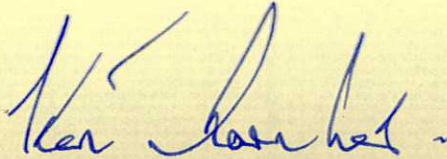
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As you will be aware, the matter of the amount of a direct payment is determined between the Council and the service user, with the service user then choosing whether to spend the money with a care agency or to employ someone directly themselves.

The Council has no evidence that there is a reduction in the quality of service provision. Indeed, we have invested heavily in quality, expanding our quality team and supporting provider training. If you believe that such reduction in the quality of service provision is taking place, I would ask you to ensure the evidence is brought to the attention of the Director of Adult Services, so that she may look into the particular matter.

The Council understands your concerns as an association representing providers of homecare and wishes to work with you in a constructive manner.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Ken Thornber', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Ken Thornber
Leader

